

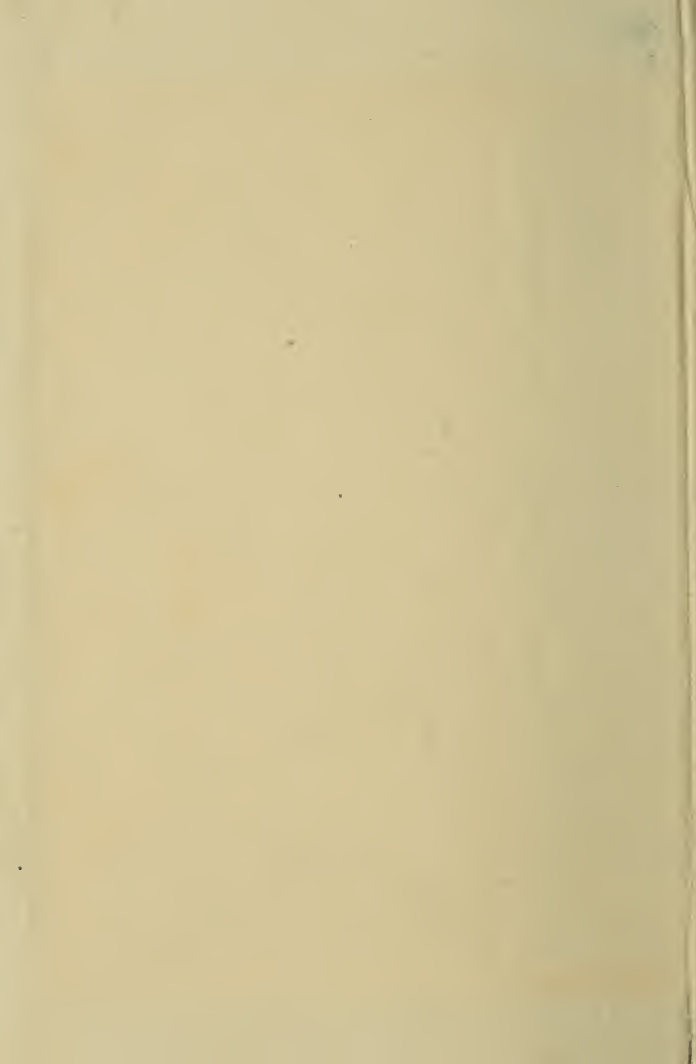
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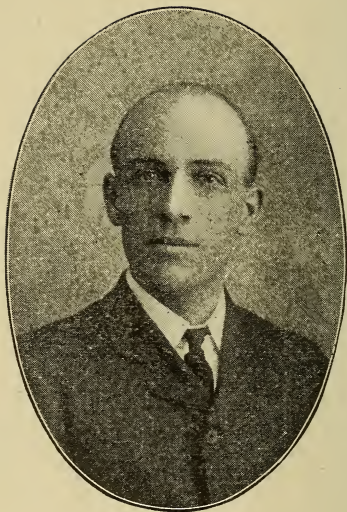


W. STRALEY



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PARAGRAPHS FROM A COLLECTORS' NOTE-BOOK



By **W. STRALEY**

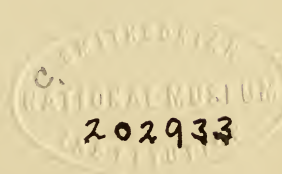
Member of A. S. of C. C. (377) and Collectors'
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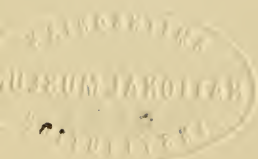


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1908





THE WHY.

The excuse, or reason, for the publishing of these few pages is of no consequence, other than that they appear as a record of the many pleasant and instructive hours spent in following (or riding) my pet hobby—collecting prehistoric relics of the early peoples of this continent.

A part of the contents of this little volume have appeared in *The Philatelic West* from time to time.

Trusting that the matter contained herein may be of interest to my collector friends.

Very truly,

W. Staley

Nelson, Neb., July 8, 1908.

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A PRE-HISTORIC BURIAL SITE

In the summer of 1905 myself and wife, accompanied by her brother and my brother, spent a day investigating a pre-historic burial site some six miles southwest of Comanche, Texas, on Willow Branch, a tributary of Mercer's Creek.

The burial places cover quite an area of the hill-side, and a few are on the level ground across the Branch to the west.

Mr. Nabers, the owner of the

property, met us with pick and shovel prepared to excavate one of the graves. We opened one of the graves and found nothing but rotten earth therein.

A few years ago a son of Mr. N. opened one of the hill-side graves in which he found a partly decayed skeleton, which was in a sitting posture with the chin between the knees. The skeleton was only a few feet below the surface.

The graves are covered with an arch of limestone, which protrude above the surface of the ground, and form a circle some

10 or 15 feet in diameter. This limestone had to be carried some distance, as there is none in the immediate vicinity—not in several miles.

We found one perfect triangular arrow-head and several pieces of a different variety.¹ Do not know whether they belong to the grave period or to the tribes who at a later time occupied this section. I have been informed that the locality was the camping place for the Indians in some of

¹ Mr N. later presented me with quite a number of arrow-heads of assorted sizes, shapes and materials, which he found on this site.

4 Paragraphs from a

their last raids through these
parts.

COMANCHE COUNTY, TEX- AS, RELICS

Herewith is given a brief outline of the various stone relics found in Comanche County, Texas, examples of which are to be found in my collection:

ARROW- AND SPEAR-HEADS¹

Division I.—Leaf shaped.—
This is not very numerous, and is rather thick and crude, though

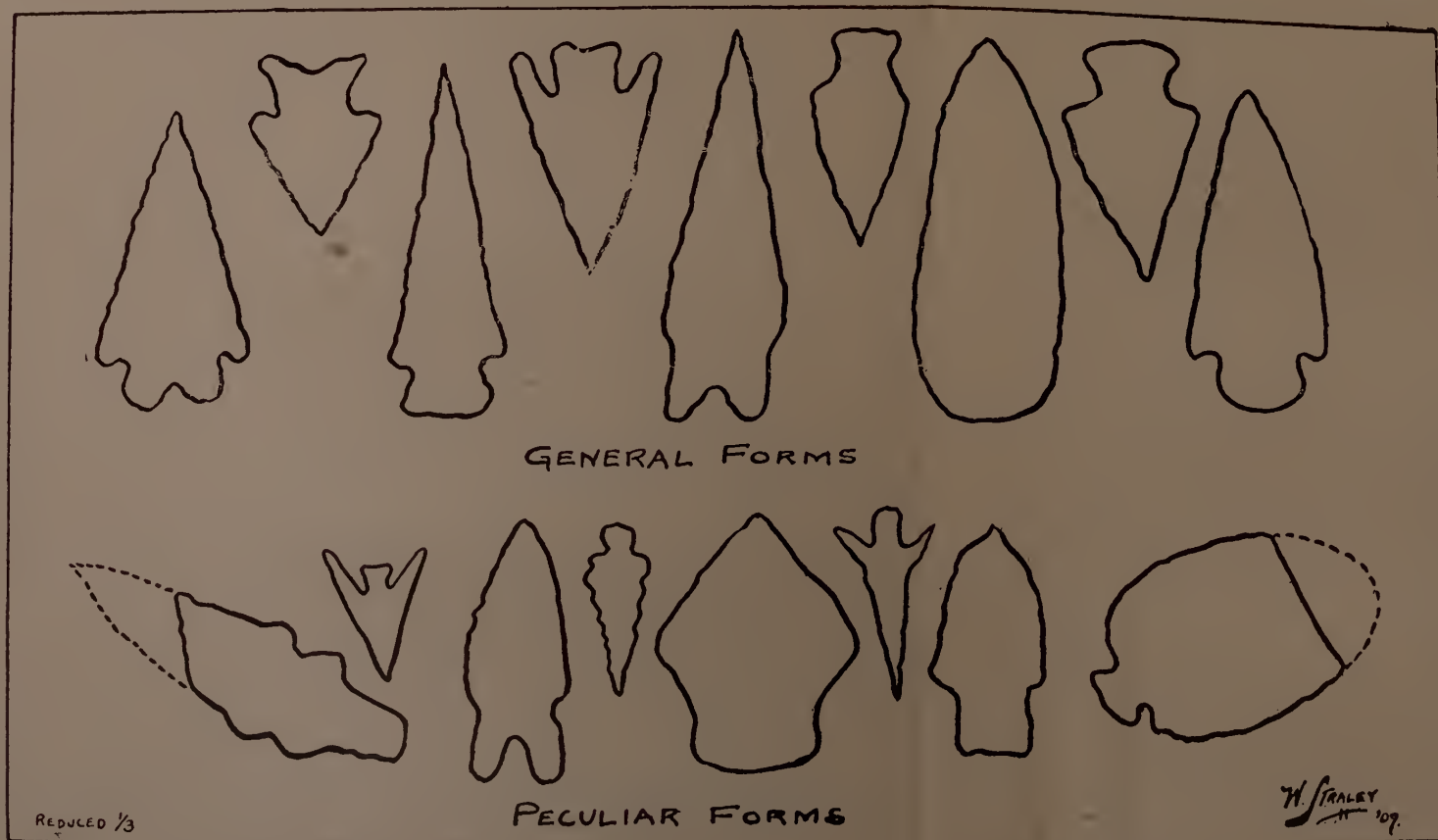
¹ This classification is in accordance with Dr. Thomas Wilson, curator of the archaeology of the United States National Museum.

some fine specimens are occasionally found.

Division II.—Triangular.—So far haven't seen but four or five specimens, and all vary in size, some being short while others are long and beveled edges.

Division III. — Stemmed. — Stemmed points are the prevailing types. Some have straight base stems, others round or concave. The straight and concave specimens are in the majority. In this division are included both the shouldered and barbed points. The points most in evidence are the shouldered minus the barb,

P.



OUTLINES OF ARROW-HEADS FROM COMANCHE COUNTY, TEXAS.

with the barbed following a close second. Some have short barbs, while others have long and slender barbs. These differ in shape and thickness; some are long and slender, others short and broad. The edges on many are beveled, but most are plain, and some are made with a twist or rotary turn in them.

Division IV.—Peculiar forms.
—In this division are to be found some very odd and attractive forms (see cut)—double barbed, spade-shaped, kite-shaped, bifurcated, stemmed, serrated, beveled and rotary edged, barbed and unbarbed.

The arrow- and spear-heads of this section vary in length from half an inch to seven or eight inches, and from a fourth of an inch to near two inches wide; some are half an inch thick while others are as thin as cardboard.

The material from which they are made are slate, limestone and flint of various colors and fineness. The workmanship on most specimens is rough and crude, while in others perfect and not excelled by specimens from other localities.

The edges on some are very

rough, while on others they have been worked to a fine and keen edge; some have blunt points, while many are sharp and well made.

The specimens found in this locality are of great variety, and are similar to those found all over the United States and Canada.

Comanche county specimens are nearly all found in cultivated fields near some stream or lasting spring. Good and perfect specimens are somewhat scarce, as they are broken more or less by the plow in the cultivation of the land.

DRILLS, SUPPOSED KNIVES AND
CELTS.

Drills.—These are among the scarce implements of this locality. During the past two years (1906-1907) that I have been collecting and studying the pre-historic relics of this particular county I have added only four entire specimens and two broken ones to my cabinet. Of these there are no two alike, either in shape or size. The four whole specimens are as follows: (1) This implement has a common form, that is, something like an elongated triangle or wedge—a

flat head which tapers to a point—two inches long by $1\frac{1}{4}$ inches wide at head; the material is dark gray flint. (2) An odd-shaped point, something like a "fleur-de-lis," except the point is long and slender. Similar specimens are found in other sections of the United States. This specimen measured $2\frac{5}{8}$ inches long by $1\frac{5}{8}$ inches wide; material, white flint. (3) A pear-shaped implement, $3\frac{1}{4}$ inches long by $1\frac{1}{2}$ inches wide at broadest part, which tapers gradually to a short equalized point measuring about half an inch long. (4) This is a leaf-

shaped point some $2\frac{1}{4}$ inches long by one inch broad; the drilling point being rotary. Of the two broken specimens—one is the shoulder and part of the body and appears to be of the common kind; while the other is $2\frac{1}{4}$ inches long by $2\frac{1}{4}$ inches wide at the top and half an inch thick, the shoulder is $1\frac{1}{2}$ inches deep and has the crust of the flint still visible, the point is small and well formed—the workmanship is excellent. Many of the arrowheads found here have the point reworked and have the appearance of being used as drills.

Knives. — This implement is among those I have to guess at, as sometimes it is difficult to distinguish the merging point between some arrows and knives. Among the supposed ones in my collection are some made from spawls of flint, long and slim arrow-like points and blade-shaped worked flint. Most specimens are broken when found.

Celts. — This is another implement of which I am in doubt as to their classification. Those found in this immediate section are of a great variety of shapes, sizes and degrees of workman-

ship. The sizes vary from three to seven inches long, $1\frac{1}{2}$ to something like four inches wide, and one-fourth to three-fourths of an inch in thickness. The edge on some are well worked, but the majority are rough, apparantly caused from large flaking. They are triangular, oblong, oval, pear, leaf and hour-glass shaped. The material used is flint of various colors and textures.

HAMMERS, PESTLES, GRINDERS,
HATCHETS AND SCRAPERS.

Hammers. — The hammer-stones that I have collected are made of small chunks of flint

shaped convenient to be held in the hand while pecking or hammering. The faces show much usage. Do not think they hafted them, as they have no groove, notch or any sign of a hafting place. They vary in size and shape.

Pestles. — Perhaps muller would be a better name for the implement; (some call them rubbin-stones). I have quite a few of different sizes, shapes and show of usage. The material used is mostly sandstone, but have one fine specimen made of limestone.

Grinders or Mortars.—These are usually made from a slab of sandstone hollowed out to contain the grain, roots or herbs that are being prepared. Some are hollowed on one side only, while others are on both, and again, some have a double dish appearance. In some the cavity is shallow, while in others deep, and in some instances worn through. A perfect specimen is seldom found.

The manner of forming the pestles and mortars appear to be by pecking into the desired shape or form and then rubbing

smooth—imparting a finished appearance.

Flint Hatchets.—I have only two of these in my collection. They are formed from a piece of crusted flint, which is left in its natural state, with the exception that the blade is crudely chipped to an edge. One weighs something over a pound and the other about three or four pounds. They are the only specimens I have seen from this locality.

Scrapers.—This implement is very crude and hard to determine. All specimens that I have found were made from a flake or

spall of flint. One end is rounded or squared-off and an edge worked thereon from one side similar to a wood chisle. I do not know whether they were hafted into a handle or not—perhaps were used by holding between the fingers, which I think would be quite tiresome and unsatisfactory. They vary in size—some are no larger than a 25c piece, while others are an inch or so wide and from two to four inches long. Have not seen any notched or finely made ones like those from Tennessee and other localities.

Have heard of some pottery being found in the eastern part of the County near the Leon River, but never visited the locality.

There has only been one pipe found, so I am informed; and that near Sabano Creek, some nine or ten miles north of the city of Comanche.

Have not seen or heard of the finding in Comanche County of any of the following: Amulets, bird stones, bone implements, bone ornaments, ceremonials, discs, effigies, gouges, grooved axes, hematite imple-

ments, shell implements, shell ornaments, sinkers, stone ornaments.

GRAVEL PIT FIND.¹

Several weeks ago² while going over some of the old Indian villiage sites, where I have been securing specimens for my collection during the past two or three years, and in crossing a field on the south bank of Indian creek I chanced upon a gravel pit therein.

The pit is Y-shaped, about 60 feet long, by 10 or 12 wide and

1 Located about one-half mile southeast of the public square of Comanche, Texas.

2 About the first of the year (1908).

from five to eight deep. The first two feet below the surface is composed of black soil in which are found numerous burnt stones and flint chips; this is followed by a strata of yellowish-brown dirt two or three feet thick which contains some gravel; the next strata is gravel—in which I found periwinkle shells and flint chips.

Embedded in the floor of the pit I found a broken implement of grey flint $2\frac{1}{2}$ inches long, $2\frac{1}{4}$ broad and $\frac{3}{8}$ thick, and appears to have been an extra long spear- or lance-head (must have origin-

ally been 10, or more, inches in length). The workmanship is very fine.

Also found an arrow-head $2\frac{1}{2}$ inches long in a pile of gravel thrown out of the pit.

I revisited the site later and found in the bottom of the pit a grinding or rubbing stone $4 \times 4\frac{1}{4}$ inches.

I examined the surroundings on the surface and found that the soil was strewn with many burnt stones and pieces of flint, similar to the village sites I have found elsewhere. In my searching I found three arrow-heads

and three or four fragments, also a broken grinding stone.

The pit is located about 100 yards from Indian Creek on the bluff side—the south bank.

Question: Did the specimens found embedded in the floor fall in during the recent working of the pit, or were they embedded while the gravel drift was forming ages ago?

A CAMP SITE.

On Elk Creek, about one mile southwest of the village of Nelson, Nuckolls County, Nebraska, in a field on the summit of a ridge¹ is found a place that has

¹ The camps are never set up close against a hill or bluff, but well up on the slope ranging from 20 to 100 feet above the lowest surrounding level, and on the summit will be found a lot of chippings—this appears that a sentinel or lookout was kept on top, and employed his time in making implements of various kinds. It would also seem from this that they were constantly in fear of being attacked by hunting parties of other tribes. This also may be the reason that there has been so much chipping done, for if expecting to be attacked at any time they would no doubt keep a great many arrows on hand that in case of emergency they should be needed.—“Indian Relics in the Black Hills,” by R. E. Holmes.

the appearance of being at one time the camping ground of the Red Man.

In the several visits I have made the site I have been successful in securing a number of arrow-heads, scrapers, an unfinished celt or knife, and many potsherds.

The finds are made within an area of 100 square yards.

The ground is scattered over with flakes and spalls of flint, smooth pebbles brought from some stream, and pottery which has been broken in the cultivation of the soil.

The arrow-heads are made of yellow and blue flint—the yellow ones are quite crude, while the blue points are well shaped, small, thin and of excellent workmanship.

The pottery has the markings of being formed in bark or cordage, while some is smooth; rim pieces are tooled. In color they are light grey to nearly black. Very fine gravel was used to temper with. Most sherds are too small to give much idea of form, but some rim pieces show them to have been quite graceful vessels. I have been informed

that the pottery was made in the immediate vicinity.

Numerous burnt rock and pebbles are found near the site to the south.

Messrs. Ritterbush, Imler, Hawley and Stoner, of Nelson, have made finds at this site.

The flint from which the implements are made was transported here, as there is none in this locality.

Mr. Ritterbush showed me a number of large yellow flint implements (between six and ten inches long and from two to three inches wide) and some pot-

tery (very near entire) that was plowed up in his father's field one mile south of Nelson. The workmanship is similar to that found in the aforementioned site.

Have heard of no pipes, ceremonials, pestles, mortars, etc., being found in the vicinity.

The only axe seen is one owned by Bert Stoner, of Nelson. It was found near town several years ago by him. It is made of green stone and measures $5\frac{1}{2}$ inches long, $2\frac{3}{4}$ wide and $2\frac{1}{4}$ thick, tapering to an edge; weighs two pounds and two

ounces. The workmanship is crude, and the groove not well defined in some places.

COLLECTING TRIPS.

May 6, 1906. Together with my brother I visited a field on the north bank of Indian Creek, about a quarter of a mile from my home, and about a half mile from the court house. Several weeks ago in crossing this field while on a photographic excursion noticed numerous flint flakes, and as it rained last night and the field had been plowed recently I thought I would investigate

and see what could be found. The newly plowed ground was so wet we could not walk in it, but we went around the edges of the field, finding a vast amount of chipping, and in the course of an hour found some 16 specimens of flint. My belief is that the place was at one time an Indian camp site, as up to two years ago there was a fine spring in the Creek that runs around the field, with fine oak and pecan timber on either bank of the stream. Four or five hundred yards west of this field the late Prof. W. F. Rogers, while digging post holes at his

residence, unearthed some 24 arrow-heads in one hole. He also found a great many specimens in the vicinity of his home. Will make another examination of the field as soon as dry enough.

May 9. This evening visited same site as afore mentioned. Spent an hour—finding one arrow-head and a broken scraper.

May 13. Visited same site. Found four particularly whole points and 10 pieces.

May 29. Started about nine o'clock this morning to examine a new location, where I had noticed many flint chippings.

Had a fine rain last night which I thought would expose the sought for points, etc. I first up the south bank of the ravine alongside the railroad east of the watertank; found a vast amount of chippings and a broken arrow; crossed over inside the pasture where I found quite a number of chippings after which I went into a cotton field, where I found a small serrated bird-point slightly nicked, and a broken arrow, also many large flakes of flint. I then proceeded to Indian Creek, some one hundred yards to the south, which I follow west

to the old spring and just below the site visited on the 6th; found two unfinished scrapers and several pieces of arrows. The old camp site is discernable in two places by the burnt limestone where they had their tepee fires; the ground here is literally covered with chunks and chippings of various kinds of flints. Every visit reveals something new.

May 27. Having been told of a site about a half mile southwest of the public square, so today, in company with my brother, I made the place a visit. The site is on the hillside leading to

Dry Branch, a tributary of Indian Creek, and is a field in cultivation (a Mr. Smith is working the farm this year). The southeast part of the field is a hillock of fine white sand, and in this sand we found a number of sandstones worn perfectly smooth (some both sides, and others only on one side)—limestone was also found, which was worn smooth apparently from much rubbing. Large quantities of flakes and pieces of flint were found scattered over the entire field. We found many arrow- and spear-heads, celts, scrapers, etc.—about 60 speci-

mens all told. Mr. Smith kindly gave us permission to search to our heart's content, in fact he joined us and pointed out the localities where he had made finds.

October 7. While brother and I were out viewing today we visited the site mentioned May 6—a broken arrow was the extent of our find. From there we followed up Indian Creek for a half mile, then followed the railroad to a point one mile distant, where we crossed over to Dry Branch, which we kept to the point of merging with Indian Creek. On this trip I found an

unfiniſhed ſpear-head and a flint implement of odd design, the use of which I have not learned. It is made of blue flint, is $3\frac{1}{4}$ inches long, greatest width one inch, and greatest thickness one-half inch; on the under side it is smooth and slightly curved; the upper side is chipped, and in two places appears as if it had been ground smooth, while the edges are worked off with very small flakings. It was found among the pebbles and gravel in the bed of the Branch.

October 28. Looked over the ground in the neighborhood of

the site southwest of the courthouse. Found a broken arrow and a scraper.

November 4. Left home at about nine o'clock in the morning, made direct for Horse Creek. After crossing Indian Creek, and about a block or two south I discovered a place where I am satisfied the Indians manufactured arrow-heads and other flint implements, as vast quantities of flaking in the road and in Mr. McCrary's orchard show. Went on to Horse Creek (it rained slightly all the time I was out) — followed the Creek south for

some distance. Found a scraper. Believe I have discovered another camp site on the south bank of the stream east of the bridge, as I found considerable flint chippings and burnt stones on the crest of the bluff.

November 11. Visited the site near the spring on Indian Creek. Found several broken arrows, etc. Mr. Chas. Cuthbertson came along and I went home with him. He presented we with two entire rubbing or grinding stones (one is made of sandstone and the other of limestone) and a broken one. He resides on

and cultivates a parcel of ground adjacent to the site where I have been making finds. He said he has found arrow-heads, besides the aforesaid grinding stones, on the place.

November 18. Visited the spring field again. Found a few entire and broken celts and arrows.

November 25. The same as the 18th.

November 29. Went to the field above the spring. Found one broken pestle and stone mortar (or tray), two unfinished celts, one entire arrow, three

broken arrows and three broken spears.

December 2. Brother Mack and I visited the field above the spring. Mack secured six broken arrows; while I found two entire, ten broken and one unfinished arrow, also two pieces of celts and two broken pestles.

December 9. Visited the field near Fleming's spring. Found nothing but broken drills, arrows and pestles.

December 22. Visited the "spring-hole" field. Found four broken celts, three nearly whole arrowheads and an unfinished ax.

December 30. Went to the field near Tom Holmsley's old place. I found two broken pestles, six spear-heads (four broken, one unfinished and one perfect), and nine damaged arrow-heads. In the afternoon Mack and John accompanied me on another visit to the site with the following success: Mack—Five broken arrows and a broken pestle. John—A broken spear- and arrow-head. Myself—A broken pestle, two entire arrows (seven broken ones), three broken spears and four or five broken celts.

January 6, 1907. Visited the Smith field on Dry Branch this morning. Found one large stone mortar, several complete and broken pestles, two entire spear-heads and eight broken ones, three whole arrow-heads and six broken ones, two broken celts and seven unknown broken implements. In the afternoon wife and I, in company with Ernest, wife and baby, and sister, went to the hills near town ($1\frac{1}{2}$ miles southwest from the courthouse), and on a hill-top where stands a large live oak tree (with a spring at the foot of the hill) we found

a number of chippings; so we began searching, when to our surprise Ernest found an extra fine bird-point, after a closer search he dug up two more, also a larger point; Elma found a large arrow and a bird-point. They gave them all to me except one bird-point. Wife and I found broken and unfinished arrows to the number of 13.

January 13. Visited the spring site with the following success: Found four practical entire arrow-heads and three pieces, one celt and six pieces, two unfinished spears and four broken ones,

two flint hammer-stones, one flint rubbing-stone, one entire sandstone pestle and 10 broken ones.

January 20. Brother Ernest and I started at nine o'clock this morning for the Anthony field south of town, and on the south bank of Horse Creek, a stream which flows through it, within the corporate limits of the city. In this search Ernest found five entire arrow-heads and a number of broken ones. I found two entire points and quite a few broken and unfinished implements. From there we cut

across the country to the Smith field southwest of the courthouse. Ernest secured four whole points and a few unfinished implements. My luck was poor here—found nothing but pieces. We visited the same site in the afternoon in company with our wives. Elma found two whole arrow-heads, besides a few parts of implements; wife found two entire arrow-heads and a number of broken implements.

NOTE. — The aforesaid trips were all made in the vicinity of Comanche, Comanche County,

Texas. I have since made several trips to the sites mentioned as well as many others.

TO BEGINNERS.¹

Archaeological cabinets should be made for study or as a pastime. For any other purpose, collections should not be made.

For the local student who collects for his own pleasure, we should have nothing but commendation, for at some future date his cabinet may be preserved. His expenditures, his trips to favorite localities that he may

¹ "Prehistoric Relics," pp. 161-162, by W. K. Moorehead.

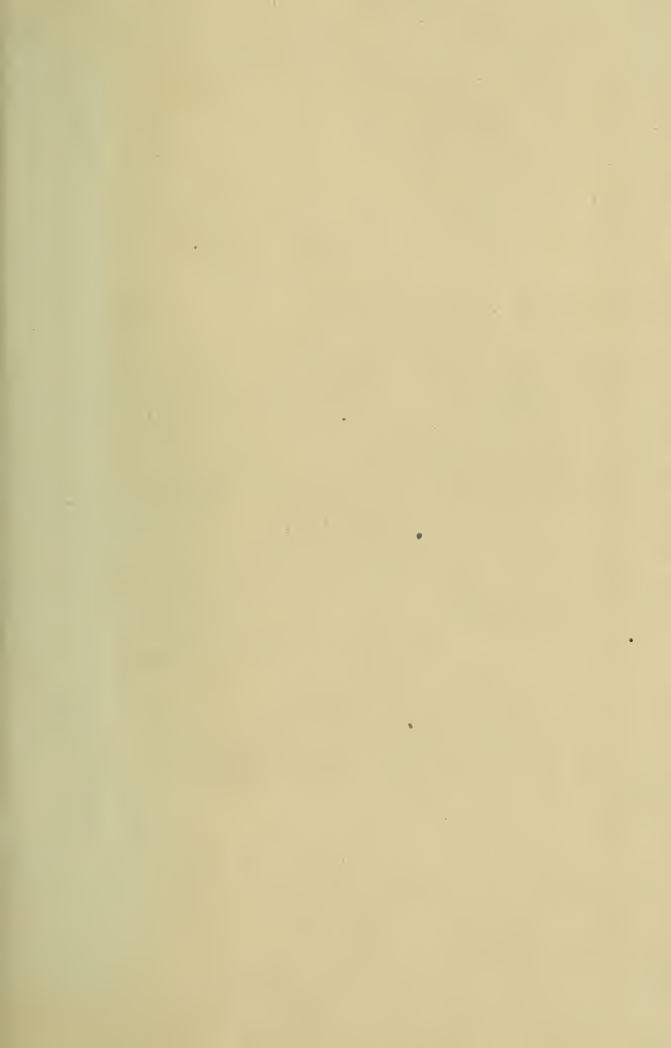
personally roam over freshly plowed fields, his hours spent in arranging his cabinet during winter evenings are labors born of love. He knows his region and takes satisfaction in that knowledge. He places no fictitious value on his cabinet. That there is no such a thing as an arbitrary value on a pipe, tube or jar he is aware. He wishes to have his cabinet preserved, not scattered, and when he dies it will be of real value to future generations.

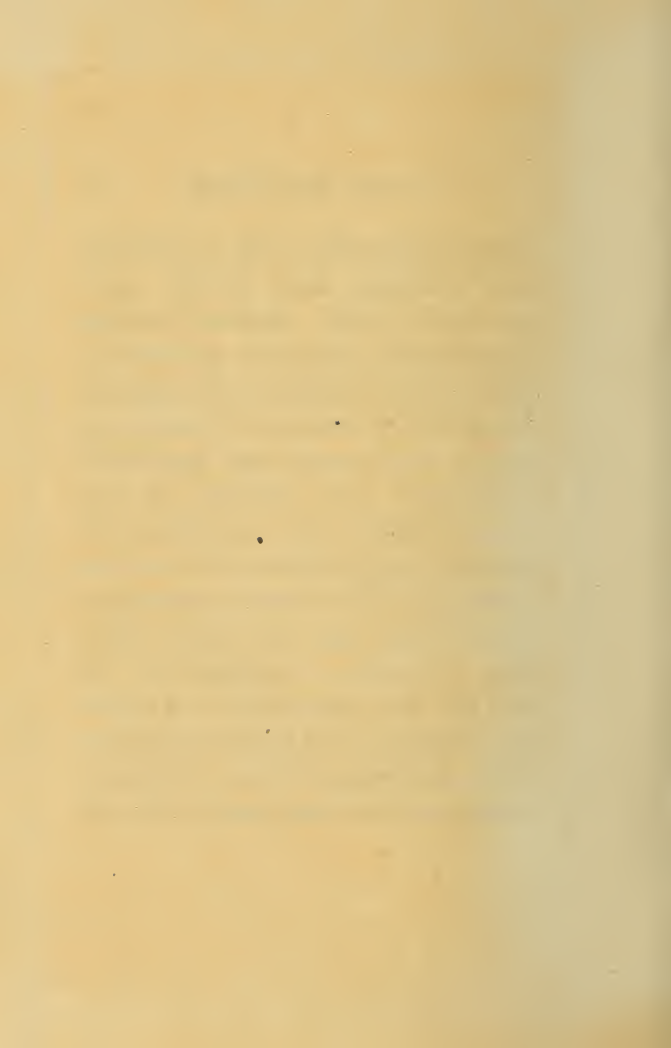
Not so the commercial collector. When out "exploring" this person cares not for the attrac-

tiveness of his surroundings. Neither the songs of the birds nor the freshness or advancing spring appeal to him. If he be out in August he heeds not the broad acres heavy with fragrant clover. Nature is nothing to such a person. He is bad enough, but the man who demolishes mounds or cliff houses in order that he may sell the specimens found therein is worse. The latter is too lazy to work, and ekcs out a miserable existence by selling the "relics" of a vanished people to such as may buy.

The specimens are gradually

drifting to the permanent museums. Every year sees new museums founded. Each season an increasing proportion of archaeological cabinets finds its way into permanent quarters in fire-proof buildings, and there these things can be studied and protected. The collector, who faithfully preserves with correct data the material discovered in his neighborhood, enjoys through many years his archaeologic pursuits, and when he is through with his collection presents it to a worthy institution, renders science a service and perpetuates his own name.





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